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A STUDY OF TECHNIQUES INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATION AND DELIVERY OF RADIO SERMONS

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of

Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Divinity

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by

James Austin Roberson

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APPROVED BY:

James D. Robertson

James D. Robertson, A.B., PhD.
Preaching Department

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The advent of the radio has greatly enlarged the vision and the responsibility of the Christian Church. It has given the Church an opportunity to reach a multitude of people hitherto practically inaccessible to the preacher. The invention of the printing press was epoch-making in the history of communication. Radio is no less remarkable. By speaking into a microphone one can communicate even with millions of people. The cost of preaching the Gospel through this medium can be unbelievably low. The "Light and Life Hour", the radio ministry of the Free Methodist Church, has this to say about costs:

> We know we reach forty people for thirty minutes for each penny we spend. That means we reach 4,000 for each dollar spent. When a friend contributes $10.00 to this worthy cause, he is actually ministering to 40,000 people. A gift of $100 makes it possible for us to reach 400,000 people (nearly 1/2 million) for thirty minutes with the gospel.[1]

The tremendous potentiality in gospel broadcasting calls for an enlightened approach to the problem of radio preaching.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. Though gospel broadcasting has made rapid progress in recent years its quality has not

kept pace with its quantity. Many of the religious radio programs have paid scant attention to the techniques inherent in the radio medium. Especially is this true in respect to radio preaching. This study proposes to furnish the prospective radio preacher with a background in radio generally, and it seeks to bring together certain techniques to be understood by him who would be efficient in radio preaching. In preparation for this thesis the writer has studied available literature on the subject; he has obtained information through a questionnaire sent to several radio stations; and he has communicated with several outstanding radio preachers of our day.

Importance of the study. Since the radio has unquestionably established itself as one of the greatest media in the transmission of knowledge, the importance of its skillful utilization by the Church as a means of communicating the Gospel is at once evident. Inasmuch, moreover, as the Christian minister's relation to radio is of comparatively recent origin, and because this relationship has been little studied, the writer feels justified in pursuing the present study.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Definitions of some of the more technical terms used in broadcasting are furnished in a later chapter. For the present two general terms are discussed briefly.

Religious broadcasting. The term "religious broadcasting" refers to all radio programs which have a religious emphasis. These include drama programs such as "Unshackled" and "The Greatest Story Ever Told", religious quiz programs, broadcasted church services, devotional programs, religious news broadcasts, religious music programs, and telephone answer broadcasts.

Radio preaching. The term "radio preaching" refers to the writing and delivery of sermons for radio. It is to be distinguished from regular preaching before a congregation in a church. The radio sermon is preached from a broadcasting studio. It is this type of religious broadcast with which this thesis is particularly concerned.

CHAPTER II

THE PLACE AND PURPOSE OF RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING

I. THE PLACE

Marconi, the first to send radio signals across the Atlantic Ocean, received his inspiration during a time of spiritual meditation as he was looking out over the horizon. Max Jordan writes of Marconi's experience as follows:

> He thought of space and time, of their relation to eternity, of the vibrations of the human mind that knows of no barriers, which bridge every distance. Suddenly he was struck by an intuition that physical vibrations, too, might overcome the obstacles of time and space! Waves of the ether, waves of light, just as the waves of the human intellect traveling at high speed, beyond all horizons--just like our thoughts and our longing for eternity reaches up to God in meditation and in prayer . . . [sic][2]

Since the beginning of scheduled broadcasting, in 1920, radio has made rapid progress. Christian leaders soon were considering the possibility of preaching the gospel through the new medium. There was from the start, however, strong opposition among certain church leaders who felt that it would be almost sacrilegious to preach the Christian message over the radio. Radio was condemned by them much as television is berated by some today, and for the same reason. Wendell Loveless quotes examples of this negative attitude toward religious broadcasts. The following examples of it are found in Loveless' book, Manual of Gospel Broadcasting.

> (a) The modern invention is like the double tongue, it sends out sweet water and bitter, but a great deal more bitter than sweet. The devil is the prince of the power of the air and he seems to have the right of way for his goods of every description.
>
> (b) The radio might well be called the helpmeet of the movie, the 'lust of the ear'. The serpent's mate has crawled from the window of the theater on Main Street, and coiled herself behind the gauze that covers the mouth of the radio right in the parlor . . . [3]

It must be granted that there is an element of truth in these criticisms, but they are to be evaluated in the light of ample testimony to the contrary.

At the present, radio is a world force. About one-fourth of the global population are potential radio listeners. The value of this means of communicating information has been well demonstrated in the political sphere. For instance, without radio Hitler could neither have gained nor retained his immense power over the German people. As one writer puts it, "Dozens of radio frequencies varying with the hours of the day or the night were employed to spread the gospel of hate to the seven seas."[4] Also, democratic nations have capitalized upon the political value of radio. The "Voice of America" broadcast of the United States is an example.

The National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters sees a place for religious radio within this world force. This is an organization of commercial broadcasters in the United States. The organization has composed a worthy creed for the guidance of its members.[5] It regards radio as the symbol of

democracy, an instrument for maintaining freedom of speech. Mindful of the great influence of radio it rightly feels that the new medium should be conducted for the common good. The organization is pledged to promote the proper cultural customs, to respect the rights of all people, to honor marriage and the home, to teach the brotherhood of mankind, to enrich the daily lives of the listeners through the various types of programs, to provide public service, and to contribute to general economic welfare by bringing buyers and sellers together. To accomplish these worthy aims various standards have been set up. With these purposes it is only natural that this group should include religious broadcasting as an integral part of the entire broadcasting program.

Due in no small measure to the recognition given it by the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters religious radio has made great progress. A writer in Christian Life expresses this growth as follows:

> Early in the 1920's gospel radio pioneers took their first daring treks into the wilderness of broadcasting. Since then, the frontiers have been shoved back and gospel radio has expanded into a world wide ministry. Radio has brought literally thousands to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. It has strengthened the faith of hundreds of thousands.[6]

The fact that there are 110 million radios in the United States constitutes one of the greatest challenges the church has ever faced. Through radio the church can reach the entire

community. Concerning this, one writer suggests:

> It is a task to delight the heart of a St. Paul or a John Wesley, who saw that to be a Christian leader meant going out to capture the mind and heart of the world with the dazzling challenge of the Christian experience.[7]

The world can now be our parish.

The chief method of promoting the gospel by radio has been through preaching but there is an increasing use of other approaches, such as religious drama, "pastors study" programs, religious newscasts, round table discussions and gospel disk jockey programs. These are promising aspects of the whole program of religious broadcasting, but it is unlikely that preaching will ever yield its priority so far as churchmen in general are concerned. The church has never found a more effective method of proclaiming the gospel than through the spoken word.

II. THE PURPOSE

Commercial broadcasting gives the public the type of entertainment it desires. It is generally not particularly concerned with the cultural level of programs. The goals of religious broadcasting differ radically from those of commercial broadcasting.

A dominant purpose of religious broadcasting is to give the community a religious interpretation of life, and to help people find release from the unwholesome pressures of life. Since it is generally agreed that ours is primarily a

materialistic civilization, this need of spiritual life is particularly acute. Concerning this matter of release from the pressures of life one authority writes:

> People turn on the radio for release, much of the time for escape from themselves. The religious broadcaster agrees that release-refreshing, cleansing is needed by all people. His concern is that it have a religious quality and come from religious sources.[8]

By stressing the religious interpretation of life the religious broadcast tends to break down the prejudice which many people have for established religion. Myron Boyd, the director of the "Light and Life Hour", writes concerning this: "People are not prejudiced as much against a radio minister as they are against denominations as such."[9] They have their prejudice destroyed in the privacy of their own homes.

Another goal of religious broadcasting is to unite the people of a community. Such programs can hold people together with common religious interests. A recent writer describes this unifying aspect of radio as follows:

> Radio in its mature aspects is the most potent force we have to unite a community, a nation, a world, in a course of action. Radio is used, or abused, for just that purpose every day, in every country that has broadcast transmitters and people with sets to listen. For whatever ends it may be used, radio, if employed skillfully, has a mass appeal which cannot be matched by any other medium of communication.[10]

But the major task of religious broadcasting is evangelism. The purpose of the "Lutheran Hour", one of America's oldest and most outstanding religious broadcasts cogently states this goal:

> Remember we have but one aim, and that is to exalt Christ, and Him crucified, as the divine Saviour, in the hearts and lives of millions. It is our avowed objective to bring the Christ of the cross to the nation and to the homes of its people.[11]

Radio sends the urgent Christian message at the speed of seven and one half times around the earth a second. It can take the evangelistic message to a vast audience that will be reached in no other way. The power of radio to evangelise the multitudes is expressed by one writer as follows:

> The clergyman speaking over a national network may address more persons at one time than he will in a lifetime of preaching in churches. The radio provides an opportunity as does no other means of communication for reaching the person not in church, and not presently a member of any church. In the anonymity of the radio audience people feel free to listen to the arguments of persons with whom they feel they fundamentally disagree.[12]

Christ's commandment that the church go to the ends of the earth with the gospel can surely be largely realized by radio.

CHAPTER III

BROADCASTING BACKGROUNDS

Radio preaching, to be at its best, assumes an understanding of certain more or less technical factors concerning radio. It is all to the preacher's interest that he have some acquaintance with these factors. Radio station personnel, moreover, are likely to appreciate a message coming from a man who is conversant with the language of the broadcasting.

I. BASIC RADIO THEORY

When sound created by voice or music strikes the sensitive microphone electrical impulses are generated. These are fed by cables into the adjoining control room where they are amplified hundreds of times. This powerful "audio signal", as it is called, is then fed through a high quality telephone line to the transmitter which may be located as much as twenty miles away. Here it is again enormously amplified and then converted into radio waves which are radiated from the transmitting antenna. The size of these waves depends upon their frequency of vibration.

Radio waves leave the antenna at the speed of 186,000 miles per second. Loveless describes this radiation as follows:

> When a stone is thrown into a water pond, the otherwise calm surface is seen to produce a series of radical, symmetrical ripples or waves, proceeding outward from the center or point at which the stone came into contact with the water. The size and number of these waves, or ripples, are governed by the volume, or size, of the object thrown into the pond.
>
> This furnishes an illustration of that which occurs when a radio broadcasting transmitter sends forth a series of radio waves.[13]

These waves go out in all directions striking, within their range, the antenna of every radio receiving set. In the receiver the signal is again amplified, separated from other signals, and converted again into sound. The act of broadcasting is thus completed. Practically speaking the time required for the sound to enter the microphone and come out of the loudspeaker of the radio receiver is nil. Actually one sitting close to his radio a thousand miles from the station hears the spoken word or music before a listener in the broadcasting studio hears it.

II. FUNDAMENTAL BROADCASTING TERMS

Attention must be called to certain radio terms with which every broadcaster should be familiar.

Ad-lib. To ad-lib is to speak lines which are not written into the script. This usually is done during emergencies when for some reason a program is interrupted, and when something must be said. The air cannot remain "dead". This technique is also used as an integral part of certain more or less informal programs.

ASCAP. This is the name of a music copyrighting agency. It stands for American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers. Much of the music used over the radio has to be cleared through this and similar agencies.

Background. For the radio preacher this refers to music which is used as a background for speech. Music is customarily employed at the beginning of a broadcast while the program is being identified and during the closing prayer.

Blasting. Blasting occurs when too much sound strikes the microphone unexpectedly, resulting in distortion. It may be caused when the voice is suddenly raised such as in yelling or in coughing into the microphone.

Board. Another name for the control console.

Boom Microphone. A boom microphone is one that hangs down from above the speaker. It is fastened on a long movable rod which can be moved and adjusted during the broadcast. It is especially for choral groups where the microphone must be placed high so as to give good balance. It is also commonly used in television, for it can be moved readily and can be kept over the heads of the actors, and at the same time kept out of view of the camera.

Call letters. These are the identifying letters which are assigned to each radio station by the F. C. C. In the

United States west of the Mississippi these begin with a "K", and east of that line they begin with a "W".

Clear channel. A clear channel is a frequency or pathway through the air on which there is only one station. This enables a station on such a frequency to use 50,000 watts of power which is the maximum legal limit for broadcasting stations. These stations can be heard for hundreds of miles at night with little if any opposition from other stations.

Clearance music. This has been described as follows:

> . . . the obtaining of releases from the copyright holder of music or ascertaining whether the station, as the result of contractural relations with organizations holding copyrights, is privileged to present a musical selection or whether the station is restrained from presenting a selection because it is restricted by the copyright holder or his agent.[14]

Control console. The control console is the large amplifier in the control room adjoining the studio. Usually this is capable of handling all of the microphones in as many as three studios. Oftentimes in small radio stations there is only one control room. One console handles all the microphones in addition to any outside wires which may be used. A control console is essentially a high-power, high-fidelity amplifier with several volume controls for the several microphones of the station.

Control room. A small room adjoining the studio in

which the amplifiers are kept and in which the engineers control the program. There is always a double glass, sound-proof window between it and the studio.

Dead mike. A dead mike is one which is turned off.

Dead spot. A brief period of time when there is unintentional silence as when there is a temporary breakdown or in a situation where a performer forgets his lines.

Engineer. The engineers are the key men in broadcasting. Always working behind the scenes it is they who are responsible for putting the programs on the air. They are highly trained and must be licensed by the F. C. C. They work in the control room.

Fade. A fade is accomplished when the volume of a program is turned down slowly so as to let a program gradually become inaudible.

Feedback. The term refers to the whistling sound which results when the sound coming from a speaker is allowed to feed back into the microphone through an open door.

Fluff. A mistake caused by faulty reading or misunderstanding a cue.

Frequency response. The rating of radio in terms of accuracy of reproduction of sound.

Gain. The control of the volume level of a program. This is accomplished in the control room.

Hugging the mike. This term is used when one gets too close to the microphone.

Jacks. Jacks are the sockets into which the microphones are plugged.

Jumping a cue. This occurs when one begins speaking before he is told to speak.

Live mike. A live mike is one that is turned on. It is also referred to as a "hot mike."

Live program. A non-recorded program.

Picking up a cue. An expression used to indicate beginning to speak at the precise moment.

Punches too hard. The speaker overemphasizes his words.

Projection. A term referring to the volume with which one is speaking.

Presence. A speaker is said to have "presence" when he is placed before the mike so that it sounds to the listener as though he were present in the studio.

Remote. A term used in reference to a program originating outside the studios.

Riding gain. The job of the engineer in the control room, involving constant control of the volume level of the program.

SESAC. The Society of Editors, Songwriters, Authors, and Composers, the name of another music copyrighting agency.

Station break. The pause between programs when the call letters of the station are given and when spot commercials are to be read.

Stand by. An emergency program which is ready in case something goes wrong with the regularly scheduled program. It is especially necessary when programs are originating outside of the studios. It usually consists of recorded music.

Studio. This is the acoustically treated room which houses the microphones and where radio programs originate. Such rooms are relatively sound proof.

Telephone radio line. When the transmitter is located away from the studios, as it always is in cities, the amplified program is sent by way of special high-quality telephone lines from the studio to the transmitter. All network hook-ups are accomplished by use of such lines. Any program which originates

outside of the studio such as the broadcasting of a church service is "fed" or "piped" to the station through these lines. They are rented from the telephone company at established rates.

Volume indicator. This is the meter which the engineer watches throughout the program. It indicates the relative strength of every note or syllable entering the microphone.

III. RADIO STATION CATEGORIES AND THEIR COVERAGES

As the prospective radio preacher approaches the station through which he is to work he should have some idea of the radius of the station.

Radio stations are classified into three groups according to their power.

One group reaches only its immediate community. Stations in this group, known as low-power or local stations, have a range of from 50 to 1,000 watts, most of them operating with approximately 250 watts. Certain channels or frequencies are alletted to these stations. Since hundreds of such stations are distributed all over the country, some of them on the same frequencies, their range is limited to about thirty-five miles.

The second classification is the regional station. The power of this group generally ranges from 1,000 to 5,000 watts. Reception here is at its best within a radius of about 100 miles.

The third class is the clear-channel station. Stations in this category are referred to as "clear channel" because each occupies a frequency on which there is no other station. Their daytime range is approximately 150 miles and their nighttime range as much as 600 miles.

IV. MICROPHONE CHARACTERISTICS

If the preacher speaks much over the radio he will become intimately acquainted with and acquire much respect for that wonder-piece of broadcasting equipment, the microphone. Its purpose is to convert sound into electrical impulses that can be amplified and controlled.

Although there are many varieties of microphones in use today, there are only three types with which the radio preacher need be familiar. He should be able to recognize these and know something of the practical operation of each.

First there is the velocity or ribbon microphone. This is a long microphone with two opposite angular sides. It is the most common kind. Pictures of radio personalities, as found in magazines, are usually made with this type microphone. It consists of a very thin metallic ribbon which is suspended in the field of a powerful magnet. When this ribbon is set in vibration by sound waves beating against it an electric current is set up within it. This current is fed into the console amplifier where it is greatly amplified. Since this ribbon is

suspended parallel with the angular sides of the microphone sound waves can strike it from two directions. Thus it is said to be bi-directional. If one is to use this microphone effectively he must speak directly into one of these sensitive sides. This type microphone is noted for its excellent frequency response.

Then there is the dynamic microphone. This type works much like a radio speaker, the difference being it reverses the action. It consists of a small coil of fine wire which, mounted on a diaphragm, vibrates under the impact of sound waves in the field of a powerful magnet. The small electric current thus set up in the moving coil is fed into the console amplifier where it is greatly amplified. This type microphone can be constructed to receive sound from only one direction or from all directions. It is usually constructed in the form of a cylindrical can, and is sometimes spoken of as a "salt shaker mike" because of its resemblance to this article. Although remarkable for its rugged construction and dependability it is not used as frequently as the previous type because of its lesser sensitivity.

The third kind of microphone with which the radio preacher should be familiar is the cardiod type. This type is really a combination of the two previously considered types. It is two microphones in one in which each section may be used separately or both together. By turning a switch built into it,

this third type microphone can be used as a non-directional, uni-directional, or cardiod. Cardiod refers to an area surrounding the microphone shaped like a heart. This microphone, about the size of a softball and slightly flattened on one side, has slots all around it through which sound may enter. It is a popular variety.

V. MICROPHONE TREATMENT SUGGESTIONS

A microphone need not be considered a handicap to one's radio ministry. The preacher's mental attitude toward the radio studio set-up has much to do with his successful use of radio. Loveless describes the proper attitude which should develop toward the microphone as follows:

> Think of him [the microphone] as a most helpful instrument, which not only carries your words or music into innumerable listening ears, but greatly enhances the quality and character of the sound, to make it attractive to those on the listening end.[15]

A reason for "mike fright" is the speaker's feeling that he is addressing a cold steel microphone rather than using it to help him convince the listener.

One should never touch or move a microphone. This is a job for the engineer or producer. Broadcast microphones are more sensitive than public address mikes and are thus more susceptible to vibrations. Concerning touching a microphone Loveless says:

> Mike is sensitive and resents being handled by those unauthorized to contact, particularly if a microphone is

> moved while it is 'alive' - when electrical current is flowing through it, and it is ready for service.[16]

The engineer or producer will determine how near the speaker should stand or sit from the microphone. The distance is determined according to the voice characteristics of the speaker, the kind of microphone used, and the acoustics of the studio. The speaker should speak as though he were speaking to one about four feet away. His distance will also be regulated by the kind of effect he wants to render with his voice. One authority says, "If you are to be confidential in your style, you may talk very low and close to the microphone."[17] This is a very commonly used technique. If there should be a large audience in the studio the speaker must talk louder and consequently stand back farther from the microphone so that the proper amount of force will enter the mike. The speaker must always make sure that he is speaking into the right side of the microphone. This is referred to as being "on-mike". The microphone should be placed level with the speaker's mouth, or a little above his mouth so that his head will have a tendency to remain raised and thus not cramp the throat.

One's voice can be actually improved by proper placement before the mike. This of course must be worked out with engineers but a few principles involved may here be cited. A radio speaker with a naturally good radio voice can get best results by speaking directly into the microphone from close range. A

speaker with a less desirable voice can improve the resonance of his radio voice by speaking into the microphone from a right angle. Concerning this Abbot writes, "The microphone magnifies the qualities of the voice. If the microphone and loud speaker are properly adjusted, free tone has its resonance enlarged."[18]

Related to microphone position is the question, should the preacher speak over the radio from a sitting or standing position? The important thing is not whether one sits or stands before the microphone but whether he maintains the same distance from the microphone throughout the program. If the speaker prefers to speak standing he should place one foot a little ahead of the other so as to give him right balance. This will tend to prevent unintentional weaving toward and away from the microphone. Some stations prefer that speakers use the sitting position with their elbows on a table. This posture prevents not only weaving back and forth but it reduces the likelihood of turning the head away from the microphone while speaking. Concerning the matter of whether the speaker should speak while standing or sitting one authority summarizes as follows:

> It is well to seat the speaker at a padded-top table. Most inexperienced speakers feel more intimate, at ease, and relaxed sitting down at a table than standing. Something about standing up suggests orating and talking to large crowds of people. Since this is undesirable in radio, where person-to-person contact is what is wanted, it is well to encourage any practice which will make the speaker feel that way.[19]

Care should be taken to avoid making unpleasant sounds before the microphone, such as coughing and clearing the throat.

If one should feel an uncontrollable cough or sneeze coming on he should signal the engineer to turn the microphone off temporarily. If the attack is too sudden he should turn his head away from the sensitive side of the microphone. A cough directly into a microphone sounds like an explosion. The radio speaker should not play with a pencil or other object while he is on the air.

The radio speaker should be aware of which microphone the engineer has turned on.

The Columbia Broadcasting System advises beginning radio speakers thus: "Make friends with the mike and it'll make friends for you."[20]

On one's relation to the microphone Gould writes:

> Microphone technique is a highly individualised affair. You will discover, soon after you have begun to practice, that the specific qualities or deficiencies of your own voice must be taken into account. Your own technique will emerge as you realise your own particular needs and as you become familiar with different types of microphones. Careful experimenting will show you how, by various positions in relation to the microphone and by changes in volume and style of delivery, you can create atmosphere with your voice. Enough practice will make some of your microphone movements automatic. You will find yourself moving closer to the microphone or further from it instinctively as you change from a conversational style to one requiring heavier projection [the latter technique is not to be attempted by the inexperienced radio speaker].[21]

VI. THE MYTH OF MIKE-FRIGHT

Actually mike-fright is not as common or disastrous as

is commonly thought. In this regard Hoffman and Rogers state:

> Today most cases of real mike-fright are found only in the overambitious writings of those who dream up terrible tales of microphone rigor mortis to win space in popular magazines.[22]

Such fright usually only amounts to a bit of nervousness until the speaker gets started. Some nervousness is good for any speaker. Without it he is apt to be lifeless. Bratton speaks to the point:

> Just remember that in the radio profession an experienced performer who doesn't get nervous every time he faces a mike is likely to find himself going down the ladder instead of up because it has become so easy for him that he gets the false idea that he can do a good job without trying.[23]

If the microphone itself seems to cause fear, someone can sit across the table from the speaker to distract his attention. Usually such help is necessary only for a short time. Most authorities agree that the basic cause of mike-fright is self-consciousness. Another radio specialist says this about it:

> Mike fright, in most cases, is just plain, everyday self-consciousness intensified by an unfamiliar studio atmosphere and a lack of confidence in the work at hand. It is nothing compared to what the platform speaker or the actor may worry about. He may forget and go to pieces. You in the studio, have a nice, sheltered spot and that sure, comforting script to support you.[24]

It is worthy of note that politicians are seldom nervous in speaking over the radio. They are so concerned with proving that their opponents should not be elected that they forget

themselves. The radio preacher must gain this concern for his message.

If the prospective radio speaker will visit the studio a time or two before he is to broadcast it will help reduce his fear. He can then observe how other speakers get ready to speak.

On the day of the broadcast one should arrive at the studio not more than fifteen minutes ahead of time. After arriving he should not sit down in front of the mike until it is nearly air time. Concerning this waiting period Hoffman and Rogers say:

> It's generally the amateur who talks shop, who reads and rereads his script a few minutes prior to facing the microphone, and who works himself into a case of nerves by magnifying the importance of what he is doing.[25]

The experienced radio speaker is likely to admit that he was nervous the first time he spoke before a microphone but he will probably say that the much-talked-of "mike-fright" is only a myth.

When being introduced the speaker should watch the calm, assured air of the announcer. This will help him keep his mind off himself, and perhaps he will catch some of the announcer's confidence.

VII. THE WORK OF THE RADIO PRODUCER

The radio preacher will be helped by an understanding of the work of the producer or director. The terms are used

interchangeably. In a questionnaire sent by the author to broadcasting stations the question was asked, "Are producers and studio rehearsal facilities available for religious broadcasters?" Eight (63 per cent) replied in the affirmative, and three (27 per cent) replied in the negative.

Sometimes a large station has one director and several producers. In such instances the producer will probably work with the preacher. In a small station a regular announcer or an engineer will assist. If the preacher has his own producer, as is the case with experienced religious broadcasters, this producer should cooperate with the station producer.

Sometimes a minister feels that a religious radio "talk" program is easy and that the producer is unnecessary. There is always the danger of such a man's radio output being ineffective.

The importance of the producer is cited thus:

> The importance of the "radio producer" can scarcely be overestimated. He is the "commanding general" of the program as it goes out over the air. All questions are referred to him, and he makes the decisions. He is the personal representative, in the radio studio, of the program director.[26]

The preacher should cooperate in seeing that the producer is familiar with the format or plan of his entire program, and also if need be with the script of the sermon. The manuscript may be checked by the producer to make certain nothing is included that is against station policy. The producer can advise

the speaker if there are any potential "fluffs" in the script.

The producer decides how many microphones are to be used and where they are to be placed; he also selects the announcer. He can advise the speaker concerning the advisability of studio rehearsal. All queries concerning copyrights and music clearances should be directed to him. If there is to be an outside organist on the program the matter should be cleared with the program director.

During a broadcast, as during a studio rehearsal, the producer sits in the control room and directs the "show." He gives the cue to each participant and keeps check on timing.

In the smaller station, where most preachers will probably work, the actual broadcast experience is likely to be more informal than in the larger stations. The writer remembers watching a religious program put on the air in a small radio station in central Illinois. The preacher and his family walked into the studio, threw their coats over chairs, and prepared to broadcast. When they were given the "on the air" sign they sang a couple of songs; then the preacher with Bible in hand preached extemporaneously until he had just enough time to sing a closing stanza. This, of course, is the opposite extreme to the more formal kind of program of the bigger station.

VIII. PRODUCTION SIGNALS

Whether one is working under a staff producer, an

announcer, or an engineer, there are certain production signals which the preacher should understand. These are signs by which the control engineer or the producer communicates with the performer during the broadcast. The necessity of such signals is stated by Abbot:

> During the presentation of a radio program it is impossible to instruct the artists or speakers by spoken words. Consequently a system of signs has been developed for conveying instructions. Each director, control operator, and conductor has his own 'handies'. A great deal depends upon the ability of the individual to convey instructions by pantomime and facial expression.[27]

Though sometimes signals vary from one station to another, the following ones are standard:

Stand by. Just before going on the air the producer will raise one hand which means "stand-by". The hand is held as if one were giving a benediction.

On the air. After the stand-by period is over the producer brings his hand down in a fairly rapid manner and points at the speaker or to one who is to perform first, meaning "you are on the air."

Speed up. If the program is dragging and the producer wants the speaker to speed up he makes a circular motion with his hand.

Slow down. If on the other hand the program is going too fast he will make a stretching motion with his hands like

one that is stretching a piece of rubber between his hands or like one that is "pulling taffy".

Move closer to mike. To make this signal the producer will act as though he is pulling the speaker closer to the microphone. He moves his hand slowly from an outstretched position toward his chin.

Move away. This signal is accomplished by moving the hand from the face to an outstretched position as though the producer were pushing the speaker from the microphone.

Louder. When the producer wishes for the speaker to speak a little louder he raises his hand palm up from the belt line toward the level of his shoulders.

Lower. If the speaker is talking too loud the producer will lower his hand palm down from the level of his shoulders to his belt level. This means, "speak a little softer."

OK. When the program is going just right the producer will give the conventional "ok" sign with his right hand. This is made by touching the end of the thumb with the end of the index finger. Closely related with this signal is the "on the nose" signal which means essentially the same thing. The producer touches his nose with his index finger meaning, "the program is running right on time."

Number of minutes. Toward the end of the program the producer will let the speaker know with his fingers how many minutes remain in the broadcast. When the program enters the last minute he will cross them and hold them that way until they are off the air.

Cut. If the program should begin to run over the allotted time the producer will indicate that all should be out or stopped by making a cutting motion at his throat with his finger.

Program over. When the microphones have been turned off and the program is over the producer will inform the speaker by using the "cut" signal described above.

From a consideration of broadcasting backgrounds the writer proceeds in the chapter following to deal with certain problems related to radio preaching.

CHAPTER IV

LEGAL AND BUSINESS ASPECTS

There are certain legal and business aspects of broadcasting with which the radio preacher should be familiar. To the writer's question, "Do ministers understand basic F. C. C. rulings and factors concerning copyrights on publications and music?" Eight (89 per cent) stated that ministers do not understand these problems.

I. LEGAL ASPECTS

F. C. C. standards for radio stations are so exacting that securing a permit to operate a station is by no means easy. So it is that the stations, careful to protect their broadcasting right, scrutinise closely their studio programs. Carelessness in this regard can be fatal. As one puts it, "Stations are inclined to lean over backwards in order to avoid censorship . . ."[28]

F. C. C. censorship. When one is speaking over a medium which carries his voice to millions of people the implications of his words can be very far reaching. Because of this some stations request a copy of a man's sermon in advance. It is not unusual, however, for a station to lift this requirement in the case of a man who has established himself with the station.

Much of the F. C. C. power of censorship rests upon the interpretation of two ambiguous phrases. The first concerns "power to determine whether or not a radio station is acting for public interest, necessity, and convenience."[29]

The second says, "no person within the jurisdiction of the United States shall utter any obscene, indecent, profane language by means of radio communications."[30] The F. C. C. can exercise complete control over the broadcasting industry through its own interpretation of these two phrases. When a station's license comes up for renewal its performance in the light of these items is likely to be a determining factor.

The fact that some stations require a copy of the sermon in advance does not mean that they are censoring the preacher or dictating to him what he is to preach. They are but acting in accord with their responsibility to F. C. C. standards.

In order to determine how widespread is the practice of stations requesting manuscripts in advance, the writer asked in his survey, "Is it the policy of your station to request a manuscript of the sermon in advance?" From the answers received it would seem that individual stations are not as strict here as are the networks. An affirmative answer was given by four (36 per cent) and a negative response by five (46 per cent). The remaining two (18 per cent) said their practice varied according to the preacher in point. One clear channel station stated, "Requested but seldom supplied." A regional station

replied that they requested a manuscript only when a program is in question. Another clear channel station said that its request for manuscripts in advance was for filing purposes only. Whatever the policy of the individual station, it should be observed by the radio preacher.

Music clearance. Another legal problem of importance has to do with music clearance. Composers like other creative artists have a right to have their products protected. Music selections are copyrighted just like other publications.

Before a composer's copyright privilege is considered violated, offense must be given in three regards.[31] First, there must be a performance of a substantial portion (over four bars) of a musical number. Secondly, it must be a public performance which includes radio. Finally, it must be for a profit either directly or indirectly. This third element would seem to release the religious broadcaster from honoring copyright obligations, but such is not the case. As long as he broadcasts from a commercial station he must regard music copyrights. Even the station that donates most of its time to non-profit purposes is under bond. For example, one station existed primarily for educational purposes but which sold one-third of its time to meet expenses was considered as a profit enterprise. Even music on a sustaining or non-commercially sponsored program of a commercial station must be cleared.

Whether or not profit is involved seems to be the factor which determines whether or not clearance or permission must be secured. If profit is involved the station is liable even if the violator was not an employee of the station. A certain hotel management was made liable for receiving and distributing music throughout the hotel without clearance.[32]

Since composers usually turn the protection of their copyrights over to such agencies as SESAC and ASCAP the customary practice is for the station to secure a music license from these agencies. Stations usually pay a blanket fee which permits them to use all of the agencies' music except certain restricted numbers. Concerning the amount of this fee Abbot writes:

> The amount of the royalties, or license fees paid, is based upon such factors as the wattage of the radio station, the surrounding population of the city where the station is located, and the extent to which the broadcasting station commercializes its facilities in selling commercial advertising programs, and subject to restrictions as to certain song numbers.[33]

Educational and religious stations can get these licenses for the nominal fee of one dollar.

Copyrights on music, of course, do not last forever. As to the duration of a copyright Loveless writes:

> When a composer or publisher copyrights a gospel song for example, he may hold that copyright, and control the use of that song, for 28 years. Within a period of 90 days before the expiration of the 28 year copyright period, he may renew the copyright for another 28 years. At the end of 56 years, the song becomes 'public domain,' which

means that anyone is free to use the song, and publish it, without fear of penalty.[34]

Another question included in the writer's survey was, "Do you require all music used on religious broadcasts to be cleared in advance?" To this question seven (64 per cent) said "yes". The remaining four (36 per cent) said "no". To avoid complications, the radio preacher should always check with his station to find what its music policy is.

Copyrights. A word is now in order concerning the copyright of non-music publications.

There are two kinds of copyrights which protect writers. First, the writer of an unpublished manuscript may be protected under what is known as common-law copyright.[35] To gain this protection one simply has to be able to prove he wrote the article. This is often done by the author mailing to himself (by registered mail) a copy of the writing. When kept unopened this is proof enough.

The other copyright is called statutory protection.[36] This is secured before the publication of a manuscript. Like the music copyright it is good for 28 years and can be renewed for another 28 years. Renewal must be applied for one year before the original copyright runs out. After this period of 56 years has elapsed it becomes "public domain" and may be used in any way.

Though the copyright law for non-music publications

appears much the same as that for music it actually leaves the preacher at almost complete liberty in using quotations.

Although there is some disagreement among the authorities concerning quoting over the air from published materials the following seems to be the consensus of opinion:

> Before using any published material, such as books, novels, short stories, poetry, and other narrative material the broadcaster should examine the copyright notice. It is generally accepted that unless the material was written for oral delivery it is not protected against public delivery for profit which means broadcasting. Such material is protected, however, against the making of physical copies, dramatization, or alteration: Most copyright notices today add restrictions concerning the use of the material in the movies or on radio. If it is not so stated they may be broadcast in their original form.[37]

If one uses a quotation from prose not exceeding fifty words, he may proceed without regard to copyright restrictions.[38] Fair dealing would require the preacher whenever possible to give adequate credit for the more lengthy quotations which he uses.

Radio libel. Then there is the problem of radio libel. When one defames another's character in a printed publication it is known as libel. When the same thing is done orally it is called slander. Libel is the more serious of the two. Defamation over the radio is considered the same as libel, and may incriminate both the speaker and the station.[39] A station's license can be revoked by the F. C. C. as a result of radio libel.

The law does distinguish between remarks which are written into the script and permitted by the station to be broadcasted and remarks which a person makes while on the air, which were not in the original script. Thus when a station takes the precaution of examining the manuscript before air-time it is likely to be relieved of becoming involved with the law.

While the law does not go so far as to say that one cannot criticize another, it does insist that one "must not go beyond the limits of criticism and opinion by attacking the motives or character of others."[40]

The preacher is to be careful not to criticize unduly anyone over the air. He is to be cautious in reflecting on the religious beliefs of others. The F. C. C. once ruled that an atheist should be given time to defend atheism from an attack made by a radio preacher.[41]

II. BUSINESS ASPECTS

Attention is now called to certain business aspects of the radio ministry.

Time periods and their cost. First, some considerations regarding the different time-periods of the radio day. Such periods are scheduled according to the number of listeners available at the time in question. The best time available for

broadcasting is by far during week-day evenings and late Sunday afternoons. This is called "Class A" time and is the most expensive to purchase. The men folk and children of the families are likely to be at home during this period. The morning and afternoon periods constitute "Class B" time. "Class C" time, which includes the pre-sunrise morning hours, is lower in cost; but the cheapest radio time is "Class D", which refers to the period between midnight and dawn.

The cost scale, which networks follow, indicates the relative value of each of these time periods. Midgley writes:

> Radio audiences in the evening are larger than those in the daytime and rates for evening periods, therefore, are higher than for daytime. Networks charge full gross rates from 6:00 to 11:00 P. M. (except on Sunday afternoon from 12:00 noon to 6:00 P. M.) and from 11:00 P. M. to 12:00 midnight. The composition and size of the listening audience on Sunday afternoon closely approximates that of an evening audience. For that reason, a rate higher than a week-day afternoon but lower than the evening rate applies from 12:00 noon and 6:00 P. M. on Sunday only. If an advertiser should be interested in the periods between 12:00 midnight and 8:00 A. M., these may be purchased at one-third of the evening gross rates, provided that a regularly scheduled program on the network precedes or follows the period.[42]

With many network religious programs on the air on Sunday afternoon it is not an easy matter for the preacher to secure time then on a local radio station. There is possibly a unique advantage, however, in a week-day religious program. For as a Christian commercial radio station manager says, "There is an advantage in sandwiching in the gospel throughout the week rather than blocking time for such programs on Sundays.

This catches the unsaved unexpectedly."[43]

The possibility of securing time during an evening is likely to be remote, because of the network commercial programs. Even if the local station does not have a network affiliation the competition from evening network programs on other stations make this time undesirable.

It is likely that the radio preacher will have to settle for weekday morning or weekday afternoon. It is a matter of record that most religious broadcasting in America comes at these times. The situation is not the happiest one; for most men, children, and young people are not then at home. Whatever the time allotted him the radio preacher should always seek to learn what competition he faces from other programs.

The cost of say a thirty-minute period on the air depends, of course, on such factors as the "class" of time, the potential audience, and the power of the station. Commercial rates for "Class A" time in the city of Detroit are as follows: local station, 250 watts, $84; regional station, 5,000 watts, $420; and clear channel station, 50,000 watts, $540.[44] Oftentimes rates for religious programs are lower. Rates in smaller cities are of course lower yet. One can purchase time for a thirty-minute religious program on a small town local station for from $12.00 to $30.00.

Securing Time. The question of how to secure radio time

for religious broadcasting has been a controversial one. Should the religious broadcaster buy his time or should he expect the station to give it to him? The National Council of Churches, the National Council of Catholic Men, and similar groups state that time should be given to the church both on network and local levels. Smith, writing for the National Council of Catholic men, explains this position as follows:

> . . . for such programs are certainly within the preview of the public interest, convenience or necessity. Such programs should be carried, too, without any charge for the time. That is why a local organization seeking time for a religious broadcast should endeavor to obtain free time.[45]

In contrast to this position one writes, "Although radio time is furnished free of charge to the National Council of Christian Churches, gospel radio must buy its own time."[46]

Many local stations give time to the ministerial association in a city. A broadcast thus conducted is referred to as a "sustaining religious program." Most "sustainers" are planned either by the station or jointly by a particular group and the station.

A question sent to the stations chosen by the writer was, "Would you prefer developing your own sustaining religious programs to selling time to individual ministers?" Six (55 per cent) answered "yes", three (27 per cent) said "no". The remaining two (18 per cent) felt that there were times when the stations' practice in this regard should vary.

An outstanding authority on gospel broadcasting sums up what the preacher's attitude should be on this matter of donated time:

> Our personal conviction is that the world, as such, owes us nothing as Christians. Do we not bring reproach upon the name of Christ, and weaken our own testimony if and when we ask favors from the world, whether it be money to carry on Christian work, or materials to build a church building, or time from a commercial radio station for broadcasting purposes? If a radio station desires to give time to the church or individual for the purpose of broadcasting the gospel as a public service, certainly such an opportunity should be seized and utilized.[47]

Whether donated or purchased time is sought, the approach to a station should be made through the program director or through the station manager. If several churches are concerned, it is always best for a representative group to make this approach.

The group should be prepared to satisfy the station on three counts. First, it must be shown that the good of the community calls for such a program. Secondly, a prepared plan or format of the program or series of programs should be presented. Stations like to work with groups that show administrative ability. Thirdly, the program director must be assured that enough talent is available to carry on a worthwhile program for an allotted time.

Program promotion. Then there is the problem of program promotion. There are many ways in which this can be accomplished. Smith suggests this:

> Placards designed by a competent advertising man should be prepared to advertise the [program] and its time in local store windows, on church bulletin boards, and if you have the money in the local street cars and busses. The cost is not prohibitive and the results will surpass your fondest dreams.[48]

Other methods of promotion include press releases, local news broadcasts, the local religious press, church bulletins, spot announcements on the local radio station, folders and bulletins distributed throughout the town, postal cards, newspaper advertisements, and cards on automobiles.[49]

To help keep the program in favor with the people the leader might consider announcing briefly worthy religious activities of the community.

How can the preacher determine the effectiveness of his program? The generally recognized way is through the number of letters the preacher receives. The listening audience may be computed on the basis of one such letter representing 500 hearers.[50]

To encourage people to write in a preacher may employ several devices. Among them are the sending out of reprints of the sermon, calendars, religious broadcasting schedules, photographs, novelties, and reprints of songs used in the broadcasts.[51] Contests are sometimes used to keep listeners interested. These include "best letter" from a shut-in, "best letter" from a young person, "best letter" on answer to prayer, and finishing in fifty words or fewer, "I am a Christian because . . . "

Conducting a telephone survey during the time of the program is sometimes done in order to determine the number of listeners. A considerable number of calls must be made involving secretarial help. Such questions as the following are asked, "Is your radio turned on?" "To what station are you listening?" "To what program are you listening?" "Who is the sponsor of the program?"[52]

There are other means of determining the popularity of radio programs but these are not usually available to the religious broadcaster.

The business and legal suggestions made in this chapter should assist the preacher in producing his radio program in an intelligent and businesslike manner.

CHAPTER V

RADIO PREACHING

I. ITS UNIQUE CHARACTER

The prospective radio preacher must from the beginning recognise that preaching over the radio is different from preaching in the pulpit. Of this Loveless writes:

> One of the first and most important steps in the direction of successful broadcasting of any kind, and certainly gospel broadcasting, is the realization that radio is different from all other forms of communications, and therefore demands different techniques and devices for its effectual use.[53]

Disregard of these inherent differences is the reason for the failure of some religious broadcast programs.

Peculiar to this type of ministry are these factors: the audience is unseen, and it is a diversified one; the voice plays the main role; and the difficulty of securing attention.

The radio preacher must accustom himself to the absence of an audience. This may seem insignificant but actually it is very important. It means that audience stimulation is lacking. In the normal preaching situation there is a circular chain of influence between the speaker and the audience. Each inspires the other. In radio this circular chain is broken. The audience is broken down from the mass to the individual. This means there can be no "emotional" swaying of the multitude. Indeed some radio programs are broadcasted before an audience

in order that this chain be present. The novice in radio should seek to visualize his audience. Loveless insists that there simply must not be indifference at this point.[54] Al Smith once remarked that a man could not give a speech over the radio unless he read it; for, he added, the microphone does not show approval.[55] He was, of course, referring to the absence of that stimulation that comes from the audience. Once while Will Rogers was broadcasting, the program was fine up to a certain point.[56] Then Rogers began to slow down and look perplexed. His jokes did not sound right to him. His announcer, Graham McNamee, sensing what the trouble was, sat down across the table from him and began to smile his approval at what the comedian was saying. The program resumed its pace.

Another difference between radio and pulpit preaching concerns the voice factor. Radio preaching is one dimensional. Not only does the preacher lack a visual audience but all that he accomplishes must be done through the voice. He cannot use gesture to gain emphasis. Appeal must be made solely through the sense of hearing. Most preachers do not realize the significance of their total personality in preaching until an invisible audience robs them of it.

This one dimension of radio preaching can of course be powerfully used. With the listener in the seclusion of his living room the speaker can, through intimacy of voice, cultivate a person-to-person relationship. Such a relationship is

likely to rule out the loud "preachy" tone. It must be even as Norman Vincent Peale says, "In essence, the preacher must learn to preach without seeming to preach."[57] In a sense the radio-pulpiteer is "intruding" into the homes of a multitude of people, and the way he uses his voice can determine whether they will let him stay or not. It is his duty to capture their interest and hold it until he has accomplished his purpose.

The preacher must bear in mind, too, that his audience is diversified. There is the group that sympathizes with him. Then there is the group whose interest is casual but who will listen if the speaker is interesting. Of this second type of listener, a specialist in broadcasting writes, "Too often the gospel broadcaster is apt to disregard this 'secondary' audience. It is a most important one and should be seriously considered."[58]

A final major difference between pulpit and radio preaching is that the radio preacher is less likely to get the undivided attention of his listener. A sermon in church is more likely to receive continuous attention. Of the listeners Loveless writes:

> Usually during the program, they will be occupied with some other activity, reading, visiting, studying, driving a car, or doing some kind of work about the home. To them, listening to the radio will be a sort of back-of-the mind attention.[59]

II. ERRORS TO BE AVOIDED

In the earlier days of radio, preachers made several rather serious mistakes. Many of them were made by virtue of the fact that radio was in the pioneering stage. The radio preacher of today can profit from these mistakes.

Yesterday's radio preacher was frequently guilty of disregarding the rules and regulations for broadcasting as set down by the Federal Communications Commission.

This Commission appraises a radio station or a radio program with respect to whether or not is is for the "public interest, convenience, and necessity." This phrase has been explained as follows, "A radio station is operating in the 'public interest, convenience, and necessity' when it is giving the public, or any considerable portion of the public what the public wants."[60] Religious broadcasting has to be approached with this in mind. The preacher must be prepared to offer something that the public wants.

The Commission, fully aware of the importance of religion and education, suggests that radio stations allow time for programs dealing with these interests. The number of hours devoted to religious broadcasting often is cited by a station when the F. C. C. questions the value of the station to the community.

The Federal Communications Commission, however, also scrutinizes the religious broadcaster to see if he is operating

exclusively in the interest of his own group or for the good of the broader community. One of the questions in the survey which the writer sent to broadcasting stations was as follows, "Are most religious broadcasting groups primarily interested in promoting their own cause or in the good of the community?" Of those replying, three (27 per cent) believed that radio preachers were primarily interested in their own cause. Four (36.5 per cent) stated that radio preachers were primarily interested in the general welfare of the community. The remaining four (36.5 per cent) said that radio preachers were interested equally in their own cause and in the community. These replies suggest that perhaps too many preachers are inclined to use radio time for the promotion of their own cause.

The National Council of Catholic Men advises as follows concerning this matter:

> This does not mean that the Catholic program (or, for that matter any religious program) should try to give a merely didactic presentation of dogma. The radio is not and cannot be used as a means of instruction the way a pulpit discourse or a study club can be used. It reaches too many people of varying tastes and educational backgrounds.[61]

Religious groups have sometimes refused to cooperate in a radio venture even with those whose theology was the same as theirs. The following opinion expresses what ought to be the position here:

> If the broadcaster is sincerely interested in sending forth the gospel to the glory of God, rather than the mere

> promotion of selfish interest, he will recognize the true value of cooperation.[62]

It is to be remembered, in this connection, that networks are more apt to give sustaining time to broadcasts which are sponsored interdenominationally.

Another condition sometimes exists that calls for correction. Some preachers have incurred the displeasure of both the F. C. C. and the listening public because of their exaggerated and sometimes almost frantic appeals for money. Loveless states, "The public is quick to attach the distasteful epithet, 'racket', to any gospel appeal [for money] made in bad taste, or in an offensive manner."[63] Of course, it needs to be said that the high cost of broadcasting "pressures" many preachers to this sort of appeal. Sympathy for this situation is expressed by Nelson:

> Gradually, the necessity of 'paying out' rests so heavily upon the mind of the broadcaster that his program becomes more and more a 'gold-digging' job. He must put in so large a number of 'plugs' in the form of requests for assistance that he doesn't do an effective religious job.[64]

To many thinking people the disturbing feature of the radio pulpit's appeal for money is the overwhelming response that often results. Eastman says in this regard:

> A curious footnote to religious radio is that in certain aspects it is big business. Variety, the weekly trade paper of the stage, screen, and radio, estimated in the issue of December 1, 1943 that the 'take' of commercial religious radio programs from listeners is $200,000,000 a year. This staggering sum goes not to recognized religious organizations, but directly to the

> backers of hundreds of religious programs who buy time and seek funds for their work either by appeals over the air or by other means. Often there is no audit or other accounting for funds thus received.[65]

However much this is the case, it is true that in the case of a denominational broadcast the money received is likely to be channeled into the organizations of the church. In any event the prospective radio pulpiteer will need to exercise much judgment in making money-appeals on the air.

The writer's questionnaire asked also this question, "Have you been embarrassed by ministers making money requests over the air, and by their handling of financial matters?" Of those answering, three (27 per cent) replied that they had been embarrassed; four (36.5 per cent) said that they had experienced no such situations. The remaining four (36.5 per cent) stated that they had a strict policy which forbade direct or indirect requests of this nature. The position of this last group is unwittingly summed up by one of them thus:

> We have a strict policy against ministers, or others, making direct or indirect appeals for money, or the acknowledgment of receipt of funds not solicited. (This, of course, does not apply to public-supported agencies.) We believe this policy has resulted in a higher type religious production.[66]

It would seem that most local stations do not object to a minister intimating on the air that gifts are appreciated. A station in central Illinois writes this caution:

> I don't object to the brief comment that gifts are appreciated. But reference to actual program costs is objectionable. In one case a minister stated on the air

> that he paid the same amount as any other advertiser, and gave a figure. I objected. Later he caused the same difficulty by saying on the air we gave him a special rate. Neither statement was 100% correct.[67]

The Federal Communications Commission has also frowned on preaching that seems to it to be unduly controversial. Controversy is not in the public interest: especially, for instance, when religion enters the field of politics.

To the question, "Do ministers have a tendency to get off into controversial issues?" One (10 per cent) answered affirmatively, and four (40 per cent) negatively. The remaining five (50 per cent) replied that ministers get into such issues occasionally. One station wrote, "Quite a few grow controversial. We refuse time after the second offence."[68] Many stations have a rigid policy regarding this problem. One reply stated:

> We have a strict policy regarding the discussion of controversial issues during free or paid religious periods. Contracts specify that the subject matter shall avoid discussion of politics, wet and dry issue, comparing one denomination with another, and other similar controversial subjects. Ministers contract to limit their talks to matters of religion and Bible interpretation.[69]

Clarence Jones, co-director of the missionary station HCJB located in Quito, Equador, stated two principles which his station observes on the matter of controversy in radio preaching: "(1) Never meddle in politics. (2) Always preach a positive Gospel message."[70] A man can preach the message of Christ without introducing sectarian or political controversial issues.

In this regard the words of James A. DeWeerd, the Cadle Tabernacle radio pastor, are in point:

> One must also be careful in treatment of other religious groups and their denominational distinctives. It is possible to preach the truth without being rude and ruthless. In an impersonal way one can refer to politics and other religions and deal with them impersonally rather than by naming them out, which is part of the ethical code of religious broadcasting. This does not necessarily require the compromising of the evangelical faith.[71]

Inasmuch as the content of sermons has frequently given evidence of careless and hurried preparation, attention needs to be focused also on the importance of a preacher taking time to prepare his message. This seems to be the opinion of many:

> It is readily apparent that the majority of ministers will spend very little, or no, time on the preparation of a radio sermon which might reach millions, while they will spend a week or more on a sermon for Sunday morning which might not reach more than a few hundred.[72]

The F. C. C. has in recent years become increasingly critical and supervisory in the matter of program material.[73]

The writer asked the question, "Do most radio preachers give their programs the proper amount of planning and preparation?" An affirmative answer was given by five (50 per cent) and a negative answer was given by four (40 per cent). The one station remaining (10 per cent) felt that only about half of the ministers they have worked with have put adequate preparation into their radio work.

Certain religious radio programs have been so tawdry that in the eyes of some they have brought disrepute on all

religious broadcasts. A minister during a period of hospitalization listened for six hours to the broadcasting of religious services. Here is his conclusion: "I did not dream that religious radio had descended to such depth of cheapness, vulgarity and error."[74]

A religious program to be worthy must be one of high quality in all things. It must be intelligently conceived and arranged. It must be well rehearsed, and competently produced.

Yet another criticism of preachers needs to be drawn to the attention of the would-be radio preacher. This is, the unethical conduct of some men toward studio personnel.[75] Preachers must show proper respect for station authorities and for station rules. The radio preacher must realize that whether he is buying his time or whether the station is giving it he is under obligation. He is to be courteous and cooperative. He should, too, exercise care lest he grow overfamiliar with station personnel.

To the question, "Do ministers show the proper respect for station personnel and for the rules of the station?", nine (82 per cent) replied affirmatively; two (18 per cent) stated that some men had regard for these items whereas others were careless. One program director commented, "Personnel, yes. Rules . . . well . . ."[76] Ministers of all people should have a perfect record in these things.

Another point of ministerial ethics that needs emphasizing is this: the man of God should always be punctual. Radio operates not according to minutes but seconds. The rehearsal scheduled for a specific time must be met on time. The preacher cannot afford to be a minute late.

A minister's sensitivity to keeping an appointment with a station is greatly appreciated by radio personnel. The program director of a clear-channel station writes as follows:

> A growing problem of late is the man who accepts a radio date and ten days or even later in advance of airtime decides he can't make it. Sometimes it is unavoidable, of course, but I suspect the guest does not know what a frantic situation he is bringing about to cancel on late notice.[77]

The young radio preacher profiting by the errors of some of his older colleagues, should be the better equipped to render effective service over the air-waves.

CHAPTER VI

THE RADIO SERMON

I. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

The radio sermon is generally much shorter than the conventional sermon. When radio preaching first began it consisted of a thirty to forty-five minute sermon broadcast as if it were a church situation.

Parker and Snyder in a pamphlet called How is Religion Using Radio state that at present 57.2% of religious radio programs in America are fifteen minutes long and that 21.4% are thirty minutes long.[78] The broadcast time of a fifteen minute program is really fourteen minutes and thirty seconds; for the station "break" between programs takes about thirty seconds. The announcer's introductory and closing statements require approximately one minute; this leaves the minister thirteen minutes and thirty seconds. Inasmuch as music usually plays a part in the program the sermon time is likely to be even more limited. Brevity of sermon length would seem to be a practical necessity:

> It is a good plan never to have a talk run over eight minutes on a fifteen minute program, or fifteen minutes on a thirty minute show. Many radio people feel that even these times are too long. However, let them be considered absolutely maximal.[79]

A survey on religious radio conducted in 1944 by the University of Chicago concluded that most religious programs

had too much talk.[80] This undoubtedly meant that the sermons were too long.

The radio preacher not only conforms to the matter of sermon size; he also writes out his message. A writer in the Christian Advocate says in point:

> All arguments against reading from the pulpit disappear in the radio studio. What is once said over the air cannot be recalled and can seldom be compensated for or explained away.[81]

Four basic reasons for writing the manuscript out in full have been advanced by Abbot.[82] First is the need for split-second timing. In a radio studio the preacher cannot request five more minutes to finish his sermon. Secondly, reading the message is considered necessary because of the lack of inspiration of a visible audience. Thirdly, there is the possibility that the preacher shall be so nervous that he will fail to recall what he had to say. Finally, to safeguard their own interests, many stations request a copy of the manuscript in advance.

The writer included these questions in his questionnaire to radio stations, "Do you permit some ministers to speak from notes besides having others read from manuscript?" "Which method of delivery do you feel is best?" Of those replying, seven (70 per cent) stated that they did permit ministers to speak from notes. The remaining three (30 per cent) said that ministers on their stations must have their manuscript before

them. Four (36 per cent) announced that delivery from notes was best; two (18 per cent) stated that the manuscript delivery was best. The remaining five (46 per cent) stated that it depended upon the man. Some seemed to feel that if a minister is a good reader, it is best for him to speak from a prepared script; that if he is a poor reader, perhaps he will do better by a more extemporaneous delivery.

Though many of the smaller stations permit a man on occasion to speak extemporaneously the manuscript delivery seems to be the norm with them. One who anticipates radio preaching should be able to read effectively. Voice control and voice inflection are more likely to receive attention if the sermon is read. Reading, moreover, simplifies the timing problem. The fact that commercial radio uses the reading method almost exclusively shows its value.

II. RADIO WRITING

Another question put to the studios was, "Do preachers know how to write for radio?" The affirmative answer was given by only two (18 per cent) and the negative answer by three (27 per cent). The remaining six (55 per cent) were dubious in the matter.

One who is to write radio sermons must be acquainted with the basic principles and mechanics of radio writing. For, as one writer says:

> The script is the heart of a radio program. Without a knowledge of the principles of radio writing, the religious broadcaster will fail in his purpose before his program reaches the air.[83]

Though writing for radio is somewhat different to writing for book publication it is generally agreed that anyone who can write well can learn to write for radio. Some adjustments are necessary, as a recent authority points out:

> . . . It is seldom that material written for another medium--the pulpit, the motion picture, the printed page--can be used successfully on the radio without extensive revision and adaptation.[84]

Principles. Certain principles of radio writing call for brief treatment. No doubt the most basic thing to keep in mind is that the sermon is written to be read orally. When this fact is recognized one is more likely to write as he would speak--naturally. Speaking the sermon into a recording machine should help a man avoid a manuscript style of speaking.

The writing must be done, of course, with the intellectual level of the listeners in mind. Though the radio preacher is speaking to all educational levels he should aim at the early teen age. Commercial radio is designed for the fourteen-year-old level of intelligence.[85] It is ever to be remembered that the average listener is not highly intellectual, and that he is not likely to give his undivided attention to a sermon.

On the other hand, a man must not "write down" to his

audiences. He is to remember that there will be people who know as much about his subject as he does.

Since radio speaking is a one-way affair the speaker (and writer) must see to it the more carefully that he is not boring. Subject matter must be interesting and it must be presented in an interesting manner. The ideas which one writes about for radio should be relevant to the problem of living. Abbot says: "It is essential that the writer of a radio address forget textbooks, auditorium audiences, and congregations, and think more in terms of human interest."[86]

Intimacy of style is highly desirable. In this regard one remarks:

> Written style lacks the informality needed in radio. . . . The effective radio speaker writes and speaks in the first and second person, the active voice, and the indicative or imperative mood. So important is the use of the second person that one can almost judge the radio suitability of a manuscript by counting the number of times 'you' appears on a page. If one does not find it used at least three or four times, the material may be suitable for print, but not often appropriate for the loud-speaker.[87]

In writing for radio the principle of repetition can be used with profit. The main idea of the sermon is to be kept before the listener throughout the discourse. This can be done by relating each part of the message to the theme. Repetition of idea is skilfully handled when the idea is expressed variously. Loveless offers this advice:

> Commercial radio advertisers have suggested a 'tip' which gospel broadcasters would do well to follow. They

> tell us that a thing must be said three times before it 'registers' effectively upon the average radio audience. . . . The radio writer who keeps this in mind, will see real results.[88]

Sermon writing for radio makes some use of the element of suspense. It also will gain interest when the element of conflict is used discreetly.

Saying a thing directly, without elaborate detail, is another concern of the radio writer. Abbot speaks to the point:

> The time limitations of radio, as well as its one-dimensional character, demand economy of expression in writing. The writer has no time to ramble around in his script hunting for the way he wants to say a thing, or repeating himself in the hope that three poor explanations will equal one good one.[89]

That a story can be direct and brief and still very effective, is evident from the parable of the Good Samaritan, a story told in only 165 words.

Mechanics. Since communication occurs only when the thoughts and feelings of the speaker are transferred to the listener, the radio writer should so choose his words and construct his sentences that this process is accomplished.

To assist the listener the preacher must delete from his message all distinctly theological words and other terms which are not part of the vocabulary of the average listener. Concerning this Loveless writes:

> If you like to say 'habitation' when you mean 'home', 'equitable' for 'honest', 'academic institution' for 'school', 'perspicacious' for 'clever', 'ecclesiastical institution' for 'church', by all means abandon that practice in writing for radio.[90]

So far as diction goes it is probably not amiss to say that the success of a person as a radio speaker is in inverse proportion to the number of difficult words he uses. The speaker is to be understood from the start. The writer who publishes leaves a permanent record which his readers may ponder at length. But in radio it is otherwise. If communication is accomplished it must be crystal clear in presentation.

Words, to aid communication, must be short. An authority on radio speaking writes, "Words that are easy to understand, easy to remember, and effective in expression are words of less than four syllables. Use as many of them as you can."[91]

One should attempt to find the precise word for his thought. As much as possible, too, he should choose words which not only create pictures but words which are specific, such as these, "When (John) went out of the room did he steal, or glide, or creep, or stumble, or swagger, or dash, or rush, or dance, or slouch, or shamble, or slip, or stride out?"[92]

Needless to say a large vocabulary is of great importance to the radio speaker.

Certain words hard to pronounce are generally to be avoided:

> . . . words containing an abundance of 's's', should be avoided as much as possible. Obviously, the sibilants, such as s, sh, z, are apt to produce unpleasant hissing sounds over the air, particularly when spoken by some voices, whose articulation exaggerates these sibilations.[93]

Since the letters "b" and "p" are "explosives" one needs to exercise care in using them. They tend to "blast" into the mike. This is particularly noticeable when they are unduly stressed at the beginning of a sentence.

The use of glamorous adjectives is generally to be avoided. Many radio advertisements have weakened their effectiveness by overusing such words as "wonderful", dazzling", "deathless", "ravishing", and "thrilling".

The figures of statistics, when used in radio, need to be written with discrimination. For example, it is easier to read "25 million" than "25,000,000." Moreover, it is best to speak in terms of fractions of the whole than to quote large numbers.

Sentences are to be constructed with care. Meanings of words can oftentimes be grasped from the context but if a sentence is awkwardly constructed it can result in obscurity of meaning. Simple and compound sentences are easily comprehended. When complex sentences are used one should make sure that they are very clear in meaning. The text of a book, in spite of long complex sentences, may readily be understood by the reader, but the same text read on radio may be a bit confusing to the listener. The successful preacher in preparing his radio message must keep well in mind the principle of simplicity of statement. The Columbia Broadcasting System goes so far as to say that in radio speaking there should be

not more than twenty words to a sentence.[94]

Composition for radio may occasionally violate a standard rule of English composition:

> We may have to forget the very first rule of writing we ever learned--that every sentence must have a subject and a verb. Some of the very best and most effective radio material is given in descriptive phrases, and not in sentence form at all.[95]

A general formula, such as this one advanced by a radio spokesman should perhaps be kept in mind: "Write as you would speak in brief colloquial sentences of familiar words. In aural writing, the fragmentary sentence (if it says something) is no sin."[96]

Since contractions are employed in every day speech they are also permissible on the air. Let verbs and adverbs carry much of the descriptive weight and use adjectives sparingly. But an overuse of superlatives is to be avoided, for too many of these tend to cause the listener to doubt the veracity of what is being said.[97]

Personal pronouns, other than the second person singular "you", should be used sparingly; the antecedent of pronouns is sometimes easily forgotten by the listener. Since references to antecedents by the use of such expressions as "the above", "the former" only serve to create confusion, they are to be shunned. If a statement needs to be repeated in the discussion, repeat it. In the interest of clarity attention is to be paid to transitional words and phrases, such as

"however","another side of this matter", and "on the other hand."

Carefully chosen figures of speech can do much to brighten a religious message. Metaphors and similes are to be used aptly. The authors of Religious Radio write: "To exchange a weak phrase for a strong one is certainly proper, but to strive for a strength and vividness that are not inherent in the original writing is not wholly satisfactory."[98]

To be studiously avoided are such trite phrases as: "add insult to injury," "agree to disagree," "beaten track," "dyed in the wool," "dying like flies," "each and every," "null and void," "supreme sacrifice," and "at your earliest convenience."[99]

Following are a number of questions with which one can evaluate the written composition intended for radio:

1. Is the opening sentence interesting--does it contain a hook?
2. Does the script show progression?
3. Does the script when read sound conversational?
4. Does it contain necessary transitional words?
5. Is the language meaningful to the listener?
6. Does the message capture the sympathy of the listener?
7. Is the message mentally challenging?
8. Does it "locate" the listener?
9. Does it carry a sense of compulsion?[100]

III. HOMILETICS OF THE RADIO SERMON

On the question of radio homiletics a recent writer on radio preaching has this to say:

> The radio sermon is an evolving art form. Of necessity, it differs in form and style from the traditional pulpit sermon. Just what elements of the pulpit sermon we should retain on the radio and what we should drop has not been fully determined. However, there are certain readily-identifiable principles of radio sermon writing that cannot be ignored if our devotional programs programs in which preaching is employed are to have influence on the audience.[101]

A well-known radio preacher has drawn up "Ten Commandments for radio preaching". Though the writer cannot quite agree with several of them, he quotes them to provoke reflection:

1. Speak in a conversational tone.
2. Take your sermons not from the Bible, but from life.
3. Leave out the word 'I'.
4. Neglect the needless.
5. No bunk.
6. No sob stuff. (Probably referring to oversentimentality.)
7. Make the web of your sermon optimistic, cheerful.
8. Check and recheck your script before delivery . . . for absolute factual accuracy.
9. Keep the word 'not' out of your sermon script.
10. Use no introduction.[102]

As mentioned previously a difficulty of religious broadcasting in the past was poor sermon construction. Since radio personalities are often artists in their respective fields the radio preacher, too, must be an artist in the homiletics of his message.

Various factors that have to do with the making of a sound homiletical message are now discussed briefly.

The idea. In the building of his message the man of God should seek to treat one major idea. This, in the opinion of this writer, should normally come from the Bible; for the Bible

admonishes, "Preach the Word". That the public expects him to preach from the Bible is suggested by the great response to radio preachers who emphasize the Word. Multitudes of people, both Protestant and Catholic, wrote thanking Walter Maier for his soundly Biblical messages.[103]

A sermon can be Bible-centered and life-centered at the same time. The Word is to be used to shed light on men's needs as they now exist. Concerning the importance of making the sermon "life-centered" Hoffman and Rogers write:

> Your everlasting problem is to choose between the lively and the lifeless. The fundamental subjects of life are all common-place enough, in the sense that everybody has a certain familiarity with them. You will try to galvanize them with a fresh and stimulating approach.[104]

In order to keep one's sermons related to life it is necessary that the preacher develop a wide range of interests. He must have the ability to visualize the other person's needs, hopes, and aspirations. The preacher is interested in all classes of people. He tries to accommodate his preaching to the needs of men generally. He remembers the returned veteran, the laboring man, the professional man, the farmer, the unemployed, and the different age levels. Nor can he forget that many among his hearers are likely to be "shut-ins." Concerning "life-centered" preaching, Norman Vincent Peale writes:

> . . . I would suggest a very human approach dealing with the practical, every day problems of people, real life illustrations and sincerity. One's success wholly

> depends upon the extent to which Christ is made real and the degree to which people are inspired to open up their minds and hearts to the influence of Jesus Christ.[105]

In dealing with the problems of life one caution is in point. The radio sermon, like sermons generally, should be positive in its impact. The preacher should not spend too much time deploring the terrible conditions of society. He must in the end be constructive, a builder.

In choosing and developing the idea of the message one should not unduly address himself to a minority group which he knows will agree with what he says. One writer remarks of the sectarian group:

> It is not they, but your potential audience that needs your ministry most . . . Think of that one individual who most needs a word from you, the one hardest to reach, the one farthest from your touch.[106]

It often makes for continuing listener interest when a preacher brings a series of sermons on radio. In this case he must clearly have continuity throughout. Each sermon will come as a sequential part of the previous sermon but with a different emphasis. The theme of the series must be strong enough to sustain interest from week to week.

Care is to be exercised that the radio-sermon is not just a re-issue of a pastoral message already familiar to a segment of the listeners. "It is part of your obligation as a radio speaker, taking up time on the people's air, to provide something new and fresh, set in a timely frame."[107]

An idea can be used a second time, but for radio consumption it needs to be "tailored" to fit the new environment.

In order to keep fresh in radio preaching it is common for preachers to maintain a filing system of some kind. Often the home-made improvision suited to a man's own needs, is the best. In this system the speaker can gather ideas for future sermons. Let it be remembered, too, that the best sermon is likely to be one over which the preacher has brooded for some time. "It does its own growing deep down inside us, and suddenly in a demand situation a lusty and grown idea will make itself known."[108]

The Columbia Broadcasting System advises radio speakers to talk out their idea to a friend before attempting to write, all the while watching the actions of the friend, and making adjustments accordingly.[109]

In the presentation of a theme one should not be afraid of originality and imagination. It is the striking, the picturesque, that stands out in memory. One program director thus complains, "My opinion is that there is an inexcusable lack of imagination in the presentation of religious radio."[110]

The goal. The minister who would succeed in radio must have an aim in every sermon. He should have it well in mind before he begins developing his message. The problem of aim is discussed by Hoffman and Rogers:

> Every talk produces some sort of response, but too often it is not the response desired by the speaker. And the reason is that the speaker has not thought specifically enough about the response he wishes to get. He has no definite faces, no particular point of view, no one significant thought he wants his listeners to retain.[111]

In seeking to realize his goal, the preacher wants his listeners to think with him, to enlist their cooperation, and to come to his conclusion for themselves; or as one has aptly stated it, he wants to "set in motion the personhood of another."[112]

The title. The title of the radio sermon is often most difficult to arrive at. The holding of an audience at the start sometimes depends on how promising the title is. One should avoid sensationalism and at the same time shy away from the prosaic. He can well remember, too, that his title is competing with the themes of commercial programs.

The introduction. It is almost impossible to overevaluate the importance of a sermon's introduction. This admonition comes from Rogers and Hoffman: "A slow beginning is fatal. Your audience will leave for more excitement elsewhere."[113]

It is permissible to "startle" the audience to attention but this must be done with care. Good taste must be observed at all times. It is considered highly appropriate to catch audience attention with a striking opening sentence. Abbot writes:

> The most difficult part of the radio address is the opening sentence. I have often read over radio lectures and picked out a sentence containing an important statement, a surprising fact, or a charming rhythm and transferred this sentence to the opening.[114]

Often quotations or paraphrases make good beginnings, but these should not be long. At times a man may find it best to eliminate the introduction, coming directly to the subject of his discussion. In this case the subject should be highly relevant to the audience.

In his introductory paragraph the radio writer will not usually want to sum up the entire sermon in an attempt to introduce the subject. The reason for this is given as follows:

> The writer has come to his conclusion in the first paragraph instead of the last . . . This entirely violates that canon of good radio writing, that the listener must arrive at the journey's end just ahead of the speaker, although brought there through the skilful guidance of the speaker.[115]

Giving the solution at the beginning of a message, without the developed reasons, may be in the opinion of some labelled "too dogmatic." It is best to <u>lead</u> people to your solution.

<u>The outline and its development</u>. After the preacher has thought his idea through, his next task is development of outline. Outlining helps to clarify progress; and it should keep the writer moving toward a goal. In "filling in" the outline each part of it might be written on separate cards. This will help keep contents distinct. Then later the cards can be

reshuffled to give the best general arrangement. Concerning arrangement an authority gives this advice, "Examine the finished outline carefully to make sure that your line of thought remains direct, uncluttered by supplementary or corollary ideas, however meritorious."[116]

The radio sermon must show progression of thought. The authors of the text Religious Radio state:

> A sermon should build in effectiveness as its development proceeds. To repeat, your idea must go someplace. If that idea travels a recognizable path of development, building in interest as it moves from point to point, listeners will not find it difficult to follow--and remember--your argument.[117]

In this progression it is necessary to keep the central idea before the listeners at all times by observing the principle of repetition:

> But don't repeat it in identical form or, habitually, in successive sentences. Give the idea differing emphasis each time, though always in harmony with your theme, so that the listener who did not understand your first statement may get it the second or third time.[118]

In writing the sermon from the prepared outline appeals based on emotion are generally more potent than those built on logic. Everyone does not respond to logical argumentation but most people will respond to emotion, especially when it is based upon reason. For if emotional appeal is not supported by reason, a highly educated audience will be lost. Hoffman and Rogers say this in point:

> He [the preacher] must 'throw a line' that will firmly hook into the wants, the desires, even while he casts

> another into the reasoning, and the detached objective thinking of his audience. 'Gain the heart', said Lord Chesterfield to his son, 'or you gain nothing.'[119]

Some audience appeals used by commerical broadcasters can be utilized by the preacher. Among them are these: self-preservation, fear, recognition, patriotism, escape, conflict, action and suspense.[120]

Illustrations. Brevity of time on the air demands that an illustration be apt and short. A short statement clarifying the point is, of course, better than an abstruse illustration. The speaker is to be sparing in using illustrations from his own experiences. Those coming from his knowledge of nature and human nature are likely to be well received. He is to avoid sentimental stories. One writer cautions against the practice of unduly exploiting child life to illustrate:

> Be doubly critical of any anecdote that centers about a child. Most of these do nothing more than present the child as cute or precocious. Or they express inadequately the thought intended.[121]

Nowhere is the "padding" illustration more distressing than when it appears on radio.

Just as unfortunate as using unfamiliar words is the practice of making reference to people and events totally unfamiliar and uninteresting to the average listener. If these are to be mentioned the listeners must be given adequate orientation.

Quotations. Quoting from a man whose morals are known to be questionable is generally to be avoided. Be sure the quotations are brief, that they really add to the theme, and that they do not occur too frequently. Poetry is to be used with discrimination in a sermon. Here, a good maxim to follow is this one: "Never quote poetry anywhere unless you read poetry well."[122] Nor is it necessary to quote a whole poem just to use a couple of lines.

The conclusion. A good conclusion to a radio sermon is as important as a good beginning. "A tame ending may give a sense of time wasted."[123]

Variety of conclusion is to be kept in mind. One may end a message with a summary, an anecdote, a scripture quotation, or simply with a note of personal application and appeal.

Just as the commercial announcer always tells his listeners where they can get the product which he has convinced them they need, so the radio preacher always in the end makes his way to Christ as the answer to all human needs.

IV. THE SERMON MANUSCRIPT

Editing. Before a sermon is typed it should be edited. The time factor is important here. The actual length of a sermon depends somewhat on whether a man speaks rapidly or slowly. One should read it over a few times to insure proper timing.

Concerning editing the radio sermon, the authors of Religious Radio state:

> Before making extended cuts, it is wise to go over the entire manuscript and rewrite verbose passages. At the same time, any obviously extranious material can be eliminated. If the talk is still too long, there is only one thing left to do: go back and examine the outline from which the talk was written. You may find that you are attempting to cover more ground than you profitably can in the radio time placed at your disposal. You will then have to decide whether, without impoverishing your idea, you can condense your coverage of the original theme to a talk of usable proportions, or whether you must put your subject aside and choose a new one.[124]

Some men, fearing lest a nervous tension will cause them to speak hurriedly, prepare a little more material for the purpose of filling their time. In such cases care must be taken that the force of the conclusion is not dulled. A paragraph or two inserted just before the conclusion could perhaps be of such a nature that their omission would not be too serious. Music may be used as a "cushion" should the sermon's timing be short. But such usage should be avoided if possible.

Typing. The manuscript paper should be of the non-rustling variety. Onion skin paper is to be avoided. So, too, is regular bond typing paper. These rustle easily. The kind of paper used in printing newspapers and on mimeograph machines is fine. This is the kind used in teletype machines in radio stations. News broadcasts are read from this type paper.

Typing should be double-spaced, on one side, and the pages should be numbered. Pages are not to be stapled together.

The typing should be such that a word is not broken at the end of a line, or a sentence broken at the bottom of a page. To facilitate reading a two-inch margin should frame the page.

In typing for radio, regular punctuation rules do not always hold:

> Dashes, long strings of periods (to indicate pauses), the setting out of important points in outline fashion--anything may be done which will help the reader to 'speak' the script more intelligently.[125]

Each copy of the sermon manuscript, or script, as it is called in radio circles, should have the following information: the call letters of the station, the name of the series of programs, the date and time of the program, the sermon title, and the preacher's full name and title along with his mailing address and telephone number.[126]

From a discussion of the preparation of the radio sermon we now turn to the matter of delivery.

CHAPTER VII

THE RADIO DELIVERY

Inasmuch as radio preaching delivery calls for a preparation that in some respects is different from pulpit speech, this chapter devotes itself to matters concerning this kind of delivery.

I. CERTAIN MECHANICS OF THE RADIO DELIVERY

Script marking. In order to facilitate reading one can mark his script, using his own marking system. Barnhart gives some suggestions in point:

> A simple set of symbols recommended is underscoring with a single, double, or triple line for varying degrees of emphasis; diagonal lines between words to set off phrases and other word groupings, or to indicate points at which rehearsal has revealed the best places to breathe; and a curved line thus ⌣ to remind one of an upward inflection on the word, or thus ⌢ , to indicate a lowered inflection.[127]

Difficult pronunciations can also be marked. A word might be respelled in a manner that would give the speaker the proper sounds. For proper phrasing when reading the sermon, Abbot gives some common-sense advice:

> Groups of words count more in a radio talk than individual words. The listener picks up phrases and clauses that constitute thoughts. The wise radio speaker does not rely on ordinary punctuation, but goes through his manuscript and marks off groups of words which, put together, bring out his thought. These groups should vary in length to avoid monotony but none should be too long for natural breathing.[128]

Rehearsal. The proper amount of rehearsal time will vary according to individual situations. But time thus spent can only make for " . . . better comprehension, smoother reading, better controlled timing, more effective use of pause and emphasis . . ."[129] It has been said that the failing of radio announcers is that they do not rehearse enough.[130] Experience will determine the proper amount of rehearsal time.

Studio rehearsal is almost a necessity. The writer's survey revealed that eight (73 per cent) of the radio stations questioned give opportunity for such rehearsal. During this rehearsal the director is in the control room, listening to the "amplified" delivery. His criticism on such matters as speed, emphasis, and pause are invaluable. Concerning the use of the studio rehearsal time one writer says:

> But the conscientious broadcaster and program-planner will not take advantage of generous co-operation in this regard by delaying until studio rehearsal preparations that should have been completed before then.[131]

Timing. The studio rehearsal is the best time for exact timing of the reading of a sermon. Conditions then will closely approximate those when one is actually on the air. At the bottom of each page might be indicated either the amount of time used thus far or the amount required to read the rest of the sermon; the last page may be marked in "seconds" at each paragraph. In this way, a glance at the studio clock will tell the speaker if he is speaking too fast or too slow. During the

broadcast the director can keep check on the reading rate by noticing the time notations on his copy of the sermon. By production signals he, too, can indicate when the preacher should slow down or speed up.

The radio preacher must realize that when the "second" hand of the studio clock reaches the top, this signifies that the first minute of the actual broadcast period has begun. When the "second" hand reaches the bottom, or thirty-"second" mark of the last minute of his broadcast period, his time is ended. Since the stop-watch is the trademark of the broadcasting industry, it is important that programs begin and end on the prescribed second. In all this matter of timing it is to be pointed out that it is just as bad to stop too soon as it is to speak too long.

In the small station, timing may not be as rigid as that just described, but the preacher should never permit himself to grow careless in his timing.

A last minute hint. Just before going on the air the preacher needs to check a number of last minute details. He should examine his manuscript to make certain that all of the pages are there and in proper order. Perhaps he should take a glass of water into the studio, especially if the talk is to be long or if the speaker is in danger of becoming "choked" as he speaks. The microphone can be cut off if drinking becomes

necessary. Just prior to going on the air, moreover, the speaker should stand ready to pick up any cues given by the director. Once he is placed before a microphone he should not wander from that position.

While on the air. The minister, who will likely be introduced by a staff announcer, should from the start try to speak casually. This will help him "sound" friendly and conversational in his approach.

Regarding the matter of holding the script while speaking, one text gives advice as follows:

> The proper way of holding and handling pages of a script will require some practice on your part before it becomes an automatic procedure. Grasp the entire script firmly with one hand, keeping your thumb on the margin just below the half-way mark on the page. Support the pages by spreading out your fingers on the underside. If you are nervous and the script trembles, reach around the microphone and support the other side of the paper with your other hand. Hold the script at eye level and away from the live area of the microphone so that the script itself is not blocking your voice on its way to the instrument.[132]

Care should be taken not to rustle sheets as they are turned. These little sounds can be greatly amplified over the air. A common practice is to let the sheets flutter to the floor as they are read.

Though a man's speaking gestures are not seen by his radio audience they should be permitted to come naturally if they will help him feel more at ease in delivery. Professional radio personalities make use of gestures. One author goes as

far as to say that a smile, changing the contours of the face of the speaker, changes the quality of his voice.[133]

As an aid to naturalness of delivery one should try to visualize an audience as though it were right in front of him. Rogers and Hoffman describe what one man does in this regard:

> A few months ago we had the pleasure of working with a real voice actor. He is one of the most forceful radio preachers we have ever heard. Although he has no studio audience, his facial expressions and gestures are similar to those of a platform speaker. He knows that if the radio listener is to feel the smile in the voice his face must register that smile. He has learned the art of making his audience of the 'blind' see and feel not only his words but the gestures behind them.[134]

If in delivery one happens to drop the manuscript or turns two pages at a time he should simply make some explanatory remark and proceed as soon as the difficulty is removed. As an authority says, "Everybody admires the man of poise who is not mortified or defeated because he happened to break a piece of formal etiquette."[135]

When the program goes off the air the speaker should wait silently for a few seconds to make sure his microphone is turned off.

It is, of course, good ethics for the preacher to thank, when practicable, all who have assisted in his program. This includes the announcer, the director, and the engineer.

In a pamphlet prepared by CBS for radio speakers, the following summary suggestions concerning delivery are made:

1. Speak to the mike as if it was a friend at the table.
2. Speak sincerely, convincingly, humanly.
3. Use conversational rate of speed.
4. Follow the meaning of the words and not punctuation marks.
5. Rehearse much.
6. Speak as you would talk not read.
7. Watch the timing.
8. Do not cough near the mike.
9. Drop loose sheets to floor.
10. Be quiet for fifteen seconds before and after air time.
11. Leave the listeners wanting more--and thus make friends.[136]

Music. Since the sermon on a thirty-minute program will be fifteen minutes at the most, the rest of the time will probably be devoted to music. Music on radio must have distinct aim. Commenting on the use of music at the beginning of a program Smith writes:

> . . . [a] purpose of the music is to prepare the listener or to 'soften him up' for the message of the talk. This is especially true in the case of those who say they 'never' listen to religious programs.[137]

The Christian minister must see to it that the music used by him is befitting the character of Christian worship.

II. THE VOICE IN RADIO

As mentioned earlier in this thesis the voice is the basic human factor in radio communication. The impact which the speaker is to make upon his listeners must be made through this medium. Says one writer, "The average member of a radio-listening audience judges the value of the speaker's message

by the voice he hears."[138] This is, of course, not altogether true; yet such a statement does intimate the importance of the voice factor in radio. Because the listener is not likely to be personally acquainted with the speaker, nor is he able to see his face, the speaker must devote much attention to his voice. As one has said humorously, [with the voice] even "the mousy little chap with the bald head, big ears, and bleary eyes may put it over better than the big boy of the platform or the stage."[139]

Qualities of a good voice. The voice pitched in a lower range seems to be best suited for radio:

> A low, well-rounded voice is one of the prime requisites of pleasing speech; hence, pitch and quality have an integral relationship. A high-pitched voice is thought typical of a scolding woman; in a man it is considered effeminent. High pitch itself is not nearly so undesirable as the quality that goes with it. The public does not object to high pitch as such. It does object to the harshness of tone of a high voice and to the amplification of this harshness that present broadcasting and receiving facilities seem to produce.[140]

Concerning volume, Barnhart says, "Although volume is controllable, there is for every human voice a degree of volume that is natural when that person is speaking under normal, relaxed speech conditions."[141] The volume of the average preacher's voice, if adequate in the pulpit, should be adequate for radio.

The radio preacher's voice should be resonant. Resonance, unlike volume and pitch, is partly psychological and

thus can be more easily controlled. By this term is meant color, warmth, vitality, animation.[142] Resonance may increase from the tension of sitting before a "live" microphone. If a lack of resonance is due to small or blocked resonance cavities not much can be done about it; but if it is due to improper voice placement it can be improved.

Voice relaxation in delivery is, of course, the norm. Nervousness is bound to affect the quality of the speaker's voice. Here Abbot writes:

> Physical relaxation of the vocal cords and of the muscles of the neck and throat is the foundation upon which all voice control is based. Without such relaxation the tenseness of the throat muscles and vocal cords will limit the range of the voice and cause a readily detectable rasping quality; a breathy, harsh effect is imparted to the voice, and all opportunity for effective intonation is gone.[143]

Concentration on the business at hand can help one to relax. "Talking up" to the mike can also help. From a voice specialist comes this hint, "If the throat feels tight, open the mouth as wide as possible without stretching and attempt to yawn. There is no better throat relaxation."[144] This last advice will, of course, need to be heeded before air time.

Proper breathing will materially aid in relaxing a speaker:

> Correct breathing is natural breathing in the sense that it is free from physical restraint and conscious self-control. While the orator can take a deep breath through his open mouth, such an intake is clearly heard over the radio. Consequently the radio speaker must inhale more quietly and deliberately through the nostrils or above the

> tongue. The radio speaker should never permit himself to exhaust his breath entirely but should breath quietly and naturally . . . Do not breath directly into the microphone . . . [146]

Voice improvement. Much of the trouble with poor voices is caused by faulty articulation. Articulation has to do with the way one produces or generates sounds. To help the speaker articulate his words Abbot states:

> The criticism frequently given in auditions is that a voice is thin and nasal, that it has no depth. Such speakers are not originating their speech at the diaphragm. A listener can almost "see" the generation of the speech as he listens to the loud-speaker. The flexible lips, jaw, and tongue are to be used to form the sound, but it must float up from the diaphragm.[146]

With some attention to this matter one should no doubt be able to eliminate, at least partially, this difficulty.

A splendid aid in improving the voice is the tape recorder. Radio speakers commonly use this instrument to improve their voices. It will not, however, take the place of a good voice instructor.

Lest the writer should be guilty of overrating the role of the voice in broadcasting, he ends this brief treatment with a word from Hoffman and Rogers:

> If your voice lacks the so-called beautiful tonal quality there is something else that may help make your talks so interesting that the audience will forget the weakness of tonal beauty. Professional radio speakers refer to this particular help as 'styling'. Walter Winchell has styling aplenty . . . Fred Allen capitalizes on the nasal quality of his voice. In other words, make your major weakness your major strength by styling.[147]

III. FACTORS INVOLVED IN READING

Since the sermon is usually read in a radio delivery a discussion of some of the factors involved in good reading is in point.

Reading ability. A common criticism against ministers on the air is that many of them are not good readers.[148]

To help a man improve his reading the writer suggests some such projects as he now describes. The preacher could write out in 200 words some interesting event of his life, just as he would tell it orally. A friend goes into an adjoining room where he listens to the preacher tell the story without the manuscript. Then the friend listens to the preacher read it. If the preacher is an effective reader the friend will not be able to tell much difference in the two deliveries. One should not be discouraged, however, if he is informed that his script reading lacks the life and feeling of his "ad-lib" version.

"To read, and yet not seem to read, that is the consummation devoutly to be wished . . . "[149] Since reading is a form of interpretation the speaker must read the ideas rather than the mere words. As Loveless says:

> The effective radio speaker, when reading his message from the manuscript, must make the talk sound like the presentation of ideas concerning which he has real convictions--not like mere reading.[150]

Communication of feeling. Good reading communicates the emotions felt by the preacher:

> [The speaker's] capacity to sense that emotion, its proper shading or degree, and his ability to communicate it with fidelity to his listeners are vitally important. The ability to sell, for instance, emotion as well as thought.[151]

Radio announcers, advertising their sponsor's wares, sometimes startle us with the intensity of feeling they put into the effort. Their every muscle seems tense. The head moves vigorously. The forehead may be furrowed anxiously. There is a complete absence of anything that favors the reading delivery.

Rate of speed. An announcer normally speaks at the rate of 100 words a minute, a rate too slow to hold interest in an extended talk. Certain news commentators are known to speak 225 words a minute, a speed much too fast for the average radio speaker.[152] The reading rate of outstanding radio personalities is both interesting and instructive:

> Average reading speed for radio ranges between 120 and 150 words a minute. President Roosevelt, who is generally conceded to have been the most effective radio speaker in American radio, sometimes spoke as slowly as 110 words a minute and seldom exceeded 125; Lowell Thomas uses 145 words a minute; Edward R. Murrow, 120.[153]

A safe principle to follow in the matter of tempo is this: let the rate be fast enough to hold interest but not so fast that the listener will miss significant ideas. Probably the average rate should be from 120 to 150 words a minute. Abbot writes on the problem of speaking rate thus:

> Suit the rate of utterance to the weightiness and importance of the material, not only to a passage as a whole, but to particular paragraphs, sentences, and phrases within the passage. The result will be not only a pleasing and logical (not mechanical) rate variation, but also that justly applauded quality of vocal composure.[154]

Fundamental to the whole question of the rate of speaking is this observation, "Let your tempo be the tempo of your most natural and sincere manner of speaking to your friends. 'Be yourself'."[155]

Pronunciation. There can be no excuse for mispronunciation in the Christian minister's reading his sermons on radio. Carelessness here can only militate against the cause he represents. This comment, not particularly designed for preachers, is made concerning the pronunciation of words on radio:

> Surely there is absolutely no excuse for the mispronunciation of common words which one hears in the messages of some radio broadcasters. Nothing will so quickly and completely isolate a goodly portion of one's radio audience--and a portion which is most worthy and profitable to retain--as careless and erroneous pronunciation. Before one attempts to speak on the air, this important detail should be checked and double-checked.[156]

According to Loveless the ten most frequently mispronounced words are these: Tuesday, New York, February, program, debut, aeroplane, secretary, aviation, quintuplets, and hundred.[157] To insure right pronunciation in radio the standard authority is the NBC Handbook of Pronunciation, James F. Bender.

Enunciation. Part of the mispronunciation of words is due to faulty enunciation: that is, a tendency to slur over or to ignore syllables. This is not infrequently found among inexperienced radio preachers. If proper enunciation is important in commercial broadcasting it should be considered as more important in gospel broadcasting.

Americans are particularly deficient in enunciation. Hoffman and Rogers put it:

> The fact is, we are as it is often said, a nation of mumblers. We do not open our mouths enough, we make a hash of vowels and consonants, we drop syllables, and we run words together in a lazy, slipshod indifference. We seem to have a democratic contempt for the style and art that have made civilized speech so different from the grunts of savages. Many who know better will adapt the worst crudities so as not to appear snobbish.[158]

Inflection. Right inflection is another concern of him who is to read his sermon over the air. This consists of raising or lowering the pitch of the voice. Rising or falling inflection should, of course, come naturally. If one is not careful he may fall into monotonous inflectional patterns. He may rhythmically raise and lower the pitch of the voice throughout. This practice is commonly spoken of as "preacher-tone".

Pausing. The value of pause is significant in all kinds of speaking:

> Professionals refer to President Roosevelt as 'the master of the rhetorical pause'. He sounds as though he

> were stopping to think before expressing a certain thought. He also uses the pause between words in a sentence. This has the effect not only of throwing tremendous emphasis on these words but of giving him a natural conversational style.[159]

IV. CONVERSATIONAL TONE

By way of summary to this section on radio delivery, it may be said that the norm in radio preaching is to be the conversational tone; that is, the voice of everyday conversation, modified, of course, by a dignity becoming the man who is an ambassador of Christ.

The writer's questionnaire asked, "Are radio preachers generally effective radio speakers?" The affirmative answer was given by six (50 per cent) and a negative one by five (42 per cent). This was a point on which there was much comment. One program director had this to say:

> Biggest problem still--on matter of delivery--is that he uses his 'pulpit' voice, forgetting that he is talking to perhaps one or two people--with their shoes off--instead of a house full of people.[160]

Another director replied in words that are typical of the general criticism of the delivery of radio ministers:

> There is no reason that religious broadcasts should constantly draw low audience ratings, but, with few exceptions, they have, and will continue to attract fewer and fewer listeners until ministers discipline themselves to learn and practice better radio techniques, and above all, to learn to preach in a manner which would be acceptable to people who listen in the quietness of their homes. No person of culture or of gentle nature (which ministers should have above all other people) would dream of storming into a person's home, and shout and rant and rave. But

> many ministers do this, forgetting that the listener is listening in his home, and welcomes him as any other visitor until his presence becomes objectionable, at which time he is invited out. And the listener can easily do this by merely touching a dial without embarrassment.[161]

Preachers and politicians, in the opinion of some radio experts, make the worst radio speakers, and both for the same reason: they overlook the importance of the conversational tone.[162] Writes one of these critics, "These people are simply ignoring the circumstances under which they are talking."[163]

A writer in the Atlantic Monthly inveighs against these preachers who must needs speak in other than a natural tone of voice:

> The tradition of the 'holy tone', the tradition of reading or citing the Scriptures as a hollow, throaty chant instead of the bravest language ever written, hangs damp and heavy upon most preachers. Some walk on tiptoe. Some bark, roar, howl, and bemoan. Some coo. Some lisp. They can and do read the greatest prose in the language as if it were a gargle. They speak not as Demosthenes spoke, with pebbles in their mouths, but with soft-boiled golf balls. They do not speak like ordinary men and women: they do not speak even like their parishioners.[164]

The minister on radio is to remember that he is a guest in the home of the listener, and should talk to people as if he were present in their living room. The value of conversational speaking may be seen in the fact that the American government chose Edward R. Murrow and Arthur Godfrey to be spokesmen to the American people in case of an atomic attack.[165] The conversational quality of these men's voices has long been recognized by careful radio listeners.

CHAPTER VIII

A SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Through the medium of radio the Christian minister's opportunity for service is vastly increased. Since the circumstances of radio preaching are unique, and since the character of the listening audience is likely to be much less homogeneous than that he has been accustomed to in the church service, the preacher must make a somewhat radical adjustment to the new setup.

He can profit by the mistakes of radio preaching in the past; for the pioneer days of religious broadcasting have taught us many lessons. While it is true that it can hardly be said that radio preaching has passed its trial-and-error period, much of its technique is now in the process of being reduced to the level of what might be called "pragmatic sanction."

With the beginning radio preacher in mind, it has been the business of this thesis to discuss, against a background of technical and legal radio information, radio preaching practices that "work". Specific attention has been paid to the content and homiletics of the radio sermon, and the part played by the voice in broadcasting.

It is the hope of the writer that as the next few years continue to shed light on the subject in hand, another, perhaps

encouraged by this modest effort, will treat more extensively the minister's relation to the radio ministry.

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[52] Inman, Parker, Snyder, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE ON RADIO PREACHING

_____(name and position),_____(station)

1. Are radio preachers generally effective radio speakers?

2. Do you accept recorded religious programs?

3. Are producers and studio rehearsal facilities available for religious broadcasters?

4. Would you prefer developing your own sustaining religious programs to selling time to individual ministers? Why?

5. Is it the policy of your station to request a manuscript of the sermon in advance?

6. Are most religious broadcasting groups primarily interested in promoting their own cause or in the good of the community?

7. Do ministers have a tendency to get off into controversial issues?

8. Do most radio preachers give their programs the proper amount of planning and preparation?

9. Do ministers understand basic F. C. C. rulings and factors concerning copyrights on publications and music?

10. Do you require all music used on religious broadcasts to be cleared in advance?

11. Have you been embarrassed by ministers making money requests over the air, and by their handling of financial matters?

12. Do you permit ministers to speak from notes besides having others read from a manuscript? Which method of delivery do you feel is best?

13. Do ministers show the proper respect for station personnel and for the rules of the station?

14. Do preachers know how to write for radio?

15. Do you have any additional criticisms or suggestions concerning radio preaching as you know it? (Use other side if necessary.)